DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 338 TM 003 906

AUTHOR Hall, George L., Jr.
TITLE Assessing Staff Effectiveness: Practical Approaches to Meaningful Evaluation.
PUB DATE [74]
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; Beginning Teachers; *Evaluation Criteria; *Evaluation Methods; Principals; *Teacher Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Effective methods for evaluating the first-year, the third-year, the fifth-year, the teacher with 10 or more years experience, and the teacher with a master's degree are outlined. Each area is described in terms of the uniqueness and the problems or advantages it represents for the evaluator. Points discussed include setting objectives, evaluation criteria, classroom visitation, conferences, and analysis of past performance. It is emphasized that evaluation be an honest and helpful tool for both the teacher and the evaluator. (RC)

ED 097338

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ASSESSING STAFF EFFECTIVENESS

PRACTICAL APPROACHES to MEANINGFUL EVALUATION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

George L. Hall, Jr.

Will Rogers, writing shortly after Calvin Coolidge was elected President, stated, "Coolidge has been in office for 60 days and he ain't made it rain yet." Well, evaluation and principals have been around a long time, and we "ain't" made it rain, either, but the difference between principals and Coolidge is that we have been trying harder, and we may see, someday in the near future, fruits of our work.

A tremendous amount of research has been and is being conducted on staff effectiveness and meaningful evaluation of school personnel. Most of the material we are reading today has some good points which we all can use in our daily activities. Some of the material, as you know, is just words; and it is sometimes hard to decipher that part which is good for your particular situation.

My intention is not to quote facts or statistics or to present a long list of new terminology, but to tell you of an evaluation method that I have found to be successful.

It would take all day to go over every aspect of whom and of what to evaluate; therefore, I will address my remarks to the following areas of evaluation:

- .the first-year teacher
- .the third-year teacher
- .the fifth-year teacher
- .the tenth-year-and-up teacher
- .the teacher with a master's degree.

TM 003 906

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Beginning Teacher

Today, more than ever in the history of the principalship, the principal has to be a teacher of teachers. We have to pick up where the colleges left off. For the past three years, beginning teachers have come to me with good liberal arts backgrounds and usually with strong backgrounds in subject area; but, for three years, I have not had a beginning teacher with a good background in methodology, bookkeeping, or general good housekeeping.

On the other hand, I have noticed another trend. It may be due to the TV show "Room 222" or the movie "Up the Down Staircase," but it seems to me that the beginning teacher today has more enthusiasm, determination, and desire to be a good teacher than I have witnessed in the past. While these are valuable assets, they do not make a complete teacher.

We as principals must now take up where the colleges left off. We must now aid the beginning teacher to reach the top level of performance that he is capable of reaching. On the other hand, if he cannot reach an acceptable level of performance, he must be told as early as it is perceived.

Criteria

In order to assess a teacher's effectiveness, criteria must be established for that particular teacher within the philosophy of the school. The following are the minimum requirements for teaching in my school:

leadership, long-range objectives, individualized and humanized instruction, and those attributes observable during classroom visits and conferences.

Leadership

Leadership is one of the most important attributes a teacher can have, if not the most important. Students today need guidance and direction, not another

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

buddy. A teacher taught for me one year who was doing a good job in subject matter and classroom organization, but (for some reason or the other) he changed tactics and tried to become a buddy to the students, rather than providing them guidance. He thought he was doing a good job until one day he got the bright idea that he was ready for his students to evaluate him. Then he found out that he had lost the students, because he was merely giving comfort rather than direction.

There is no such thing as a teacher getting on a student's level. The teacher must direct the student in deciding how to set and reach his objectives. Points which may aid the teacher in becoming a better leader and in gaining classroom control are: the order in which students enter and leave the class, the teacher's readiness to go to work, the teacher's organization. Many teachers at the sound of the bell permit students to stampede out of their rooms like a herd of cattle. I constantly tell my teachers that the bell does not dismiss the students; it is merely a signal for the teacher to dismiss the class. One of my main hang-ups (all principals are entitled to at least one) is a teacher who sits at or on his desk continuously. I always make a point to tell beginning teachers that this practice is the best way to lose the leadership role in the class. Constantly sitting on the desk or behind it can only be used by the master teacher; and even then I have my reservations. I believe it is the teacher, not the student, who should be the leader of the classroom.

Long-Range Objectives

With accountability being thrust upon the teachers today as it is, and rightly so in my opinion, the teacher must be able to write his long-range objectives broadly enough and yet reasonably enough so that they can be reached. The principal must explain this fact to the teacher and make sure that he

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

understands that the student is also entitled to know what is expected of him. The student is also entitled to know what he will be able to do at the end of the term, providing all of his objectives are reasonable. The teacher must also be able to know when the student is not capable of reaching his set objectives and then to help him formulate new objectives through which he can experience success. The long-range objectives should focus on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The objectives should be broken down further into short-range objectives.

The teacher's first evaluation comes after the long-range objectives have been formulated. No written evaluation is made at this time. What usually takes place at this point is an evaluation of the objectives. If they are feasible, the teacher is told. If they are not, the principal aids the teacher in formulating realistic objectives which can be reached within the student's potential, and within the policies of the school and the school board.

A constant watch is kept on the long-range objectives and the student's progress with these criteria in mind:

1. consultation with the teacher
2. progress of the student (achievement tests, test grades, etc.)
3. lesson plans
4. lesson-correlated study trips and mass participation activities
5. evaluation of short-range objectives in relationship to long-range objectives.

Classroom Visitation

After the long-range objectives have been put into proper perspective, and after the assistant principal, department chairman, and I have agreed that they are realistic objectives, I make my first formal classroom visitation. This is a general observation to make the teacher feel at ease in my presence. As soon after this visit as practical, the teacher comes to my office for consultation. To be meaningful, this consultation has to be completed the same day of the visit. I make it clear at this point that when I visit

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

his room I am there to help him, not to criticize him. He is also told that I will visit him at least once a day and that I have no intention of giving a written evaluation unless I spend enough time in his room to know what is going on.

When visiting the teacher's classroom, I observe for the following:

1. Is the climate of the classroom conducive to good educational practices; one in which the child can enjoy himself and feel that he belongs?
2. Does he have good rapport with the students?
3. What types of materials are available for each student (audio-visual, program materials, extra reading materials, etc.)?
4. Is he a good housekeeper: all materials in order and a clean room?
5. Does he communicate with the students on their level of understanding?
6. Does he move about the room, not using the desk as a crutch?
7. Does he ask enough thought-provoking questions of the students?
8. Does he have the patience to work with a small group of students or an individual?
9. Are new and different teaching techniques tried?
10. Are the students stimulated to think and evaluate information?

The assistant principal and department chairman evaluate by using the same criteria which have just been stated. As often as either of us feels is necessary, we call the beginning teacher in for consultation. At this time, the teacher is presented with a written copy of our findings with recommendations for improvements. The teacher is also asked to write what he feels are his weak and strong points and what he would like us to do in order to help him improve. The latter step is extremely important in order to help the beginning teacher ascertain an accurate evaluation of himself.

Individualizing and Humanizing Instruction

If the beginning teacher has not had a course in individualizing and humanizing instruction in his undergraduate studies, it is difficult for him to adjust immediately to performance objectives. If this is the case, I assign the assistant principal and department chairman to orient the teacher

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

on what we expect on individualized and humanized instruction. In the presence of the assistant principal and the beginning teacher, I go over a student's complete profile and I try to state at this time how a profile is to be drawn for an individual, keeping in mind that the objectives, in some cases, will fit all the students in the class, but in other cases they will fit only the individual for whom the objectives have been formulated. Understanding what a student profile is can be the most difficult part of the evaluation for the beginning teacher who has not been in a situation which has been completely individualized and humanized. Initially when a teacher begins to individualize and humanize his classes, he sees himself as condescending, as teaching elementary students rather than as the sophisticated professor of the high school. Categorically, he has just left a college where the professor stood in front of the room all period lecturing while all he did was take notes. When this castastrophe has taken place, we have to debrief the teacher in order to get him away from this type of teaching. We encourage that he teach as he was taught to teach and not as he was taught. The teacher has to understand that now we have a different type of student from what we had five years ago. The students today need less lecture and more work at which they can be successful. In my opinion, the only person who enjoys a lecture is the person giving it. Once the teacher understands this concept he usually adjusts very well and settles down to working with the individual.

Conference

The final evaluation of the beginning teacher is the conference. In this meeting the beginning teacher and I compare our evaluations of him. At this time he is given a written evaluation of his performance as a teacher. The conference is used to discuss the teacher's job performance and the implications of this evaluation. The cause of job performance or the lack of it is analyzed. This session is used to analyze his failure to reach certain objectives and to discuss approaches to reaching these objectives as well as to reinforce his

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

accomplishments. This final form of evaluation should be a fair critical analysis of his positive and negative attributes. At no time during this conference or any other conference is it to be used as a threat of dismissal but only to improve his performance.

When evaluating the beginning teacher, I constantly bear in mind that the beginning teacher's students have been influenced by other teachers over a long period of time. Therefore, I cannot expect the first year teacher to work miracles by creating new products of his students. This is a serious point and should be taken into consideration in evaluating a teacher before sayint that he did or did not do his job. The principal must keep in mind what exists in a classroom and the type of students a teacher has, especially a beginning teacher. If the situation is such that a teacher winds up with students who have been known to be disciplinary problems, then he must be evaluated by the progress he has made with these students.

The Third Year Teacher

After three continuous years in the same school division in Virginia and a recommendation by the principal that the teacher's work has been satisfactory, the teacher is given a continuous contract. Keeping in mind that a continuous contract almost gives the teacher a life-time assurance for his job, the principal must carefully assess the teacher's effectiveness at this point so as not to end with an inferior and/or ineffective staff. Therefore, the evaluation of the third year teacher is the most crucial, because the principal must be fair, yet protect the school at the same time.

The following list are some things I do or look for when evaluating a third year teacher:

1. analyze the past two year's performance
2. analyze the set objectives
3. make formal classroom visitations

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Analyze the Past Two Year's Performance

Prior to the closing of school and at the end of the teacher's second year, he is called in for a rather lengthy conference. If this conference cannot be terminated in one sitting, there is no hesitation to continue it to the next day. At this conference the teacher is asked to re-evaluate himself in terms of his strong and weak points. The teacher usually writes these points down. We then go over these points together and I insert strong or weak points which I have observed. If the teacher tries to toot his horn too much or underestimates himself, I correct such tendencies immediately.

During the conference I try to avoid small talk as much as possible and direct my energy to analyzing what the teacher has accomplished in terms of his objectives. I spend a lot of time allowing the teacher to take a good look at his past two years. While the teacher is talking, I look for enthusiasm, teacher satisfaction, confidence, and an expression of security in his job. I expecially like a teacher to talk about what he is going to do next year in light of what he did this year.

Set Objectives

At the beginning of the school year or as near as possible, I meet with the third year teacher and help him set up objectives which I hope will strengthen his weak points and reinforce his strong points. At this time I submit a list of recommendations to the teacher that I feel are needed to improve his performance. The teacher will be called in from time to time to see if he is following the recommendations. My thinking here is that a teacher who has been with me for two years should be following my recommendations which are based on sound educational principles and if they are not working we should be seeking new ways to improve his performance. On the other hand, if he has not followed

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

my recommendations, I am forced to make a value judgment.

Classroom Visitation

When visiting the third-year teacher's room, I expect to find him relaxed, confident, and having a good rapport with the students. By now the textbook should be used less and replaced by a variety of teaching methods and materials. The policies of the school board and the school should be routine. The atmosphere of the room should be of the type that would make me want to visit the room often. There are some teachers that I just like to be around. They make me feel good and I find myself visiting this class often. If I like to be around a certain teacher then more than likely his students like being around him. I realize that all teachers cannot have this magnetism, but if he has none I will not hesitate to tell him he is in the wrong profession. I expect the third year teacher to be fully utilizing the following with his students:

1. resource persons
2. audiovisual equipment
3. library
4. correlated classroom and study trips
5. some intradisciplinary work

Of course the third year teacher has the same criteria to follow as the first year teacher, but the third year teacher is expected to be a little more polished. I feel that the third year teacher should be able to handle all of his duties with ease except being able to intradiscipline his course with other elements of the school. I leave this task to the fifth year teacher.

The Fifth Year Teacher

The fifth year teacher, in my opinion, should be the easiest teacher to supervise and to evaluate, but at times he is the most difficult since it is also the most critical time for the teacher. This is the year that the teacher starts thinking of finishing his master's degree or of getting out of the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

profession. We lose a large number of teachers at the end of this year. If the principal has been alert and has properly evaluated the teacher by making sure that he has reached all feasible objectives, he will have a very productive teacher of whom he is proud and one who is proud of himself. The fifth year teacher should have his courses intradisciplined for each individual. He has learned by now what takes place in other subjects and how the teachers of the other disciplines teach. By now he should be able to correlate the individual's profile with subject matter throughout the school. I expect the fifth year teacher to be a strong person in guidance and one who innovates when needed. This teacher is confident, secure, and knowledgeable in his subject; he knows his strengths and weaknesses as well as those of his students.

This teacher should be contributing at departmental meetings in such a manner that younger teachers respect him and his opinion. I expect this teacher to be near or have completed his master's degree in his subject field. The fifth year teacher should be having a few papers published or at least be making efforts in that direction. The lesson plans for this teacher should be compiled in syllabus form by now and require only minor revisions. This person should not be having those common disciplinary problems which haunt the younger teacher. He is practicing the theory of respecting the student before he expects to be respected. His classes are individualized and humanized. He seeks advice and constructive criticisms and offers helpful suggestions for his own improvement.

The criteria are the same for all teachers, but the fifth year teacher is allowed more latitude within the framework of the criteria and the philosophy of the school. You expect more from this teacher and if you have guided him properly he will produce it.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Tenth Year and Up Teacher

On the tenth year and up teachers, let's be frank with ourselves. We have one or two things on our hands. If we, as principals and as teachers of teachers, have done a good job in evaluating our products, then we have a good teacher with 10 years' experience. If we have not been honest with our evaluations and we have allowed things to slip by, then we may have a teacher with one year's experience 10 times. Let's face it. If this teacher has been around 10 or more years, what can we do? Well, believe it or not, this teacher needs the same help and is entitled to all of our services as every teacher is. Probably more than any other teacher, this teacher could in many cases need more help than the beginning teacher.

The tenth year and up teacher follows the set criteria, but I expect this teacher to be an established guidance person and one who can help guide those teachers with less experience. This teacher should be a resource person who is capable of helping formulate policies, coordinating the program and deciphering those things which help his program and make it different from those which are mediocre. You should not have to spend time with the teacher on school policy or philosophy. If this teacher really has 10 years' expetiance then probably several papers have been published by this teacher to aid other teachers coming along.

The critical point to watch for is to see if he is bitter. If so, is there a carry-over to the students? I watch to see if he is happy, giving the students a desire to learn his subject, and to see if students take his courses because he has something to offer them rather than because the courses are required. By now this teacher should have a good story to tell and should enjoy telling it.

The Teacher with a Master's Degree

I have placed the teacher with a master's degree last, because I believe

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

that this teacher should be able to do all the things the other teachers do in his field and be able to exemplify leadership in research and have a deeper understanding of the process of education. I told one of my teachers this during the year. After two years of teaching he secured a master's degree and when I explained to him that I expected a person with a master's degree to be a representative of that degree, he laughed and said, "A master's degree merely gives you more money." You know, in his case he was right.

Summary

With respect to all I have said in assessing the effectiveness of the staff, we as principals or teachers of teachers should not be too critical of the colleges for what they turn out; neither should we expect perfect teachers even after we have worked with them for a number of years.

Will Rogers has said many times, "All he knew was what he read in the newspaper." With apologies to Mr. Rogers, all I know is what is in the schools, and I realize that there is no perfect way to evaluate other persons; therefore, I must be honest in the evaluation and make sure that the evaluation is a helpful tool for both the teacher and the principal.